

REMARKS

As correctly noted in the Office Action Summary, claims 28-54 were pending.

By the present response, claims 29-47 and 49-50 have been amended, claims 48 and claims 51-54 have been canceled, and claim 55 has been added. Thus, upon entry of the present response, claims 28-47, 49, 50 and 55 are pending and await further consideration on the merits. In the Official Action of September 10, 2007, restriction was required from among the following groups of inventions:

Group I, Claims 28-44;

Group II, Claim 45;

Group III, Claim 46;

Group IV, Claims 47-48;

Group V, Claims 59-50;

Group VI, Claim 51;

Group VI, Claim 52;

Group VIII, Claim 53; and

Group IX, Claim 54.

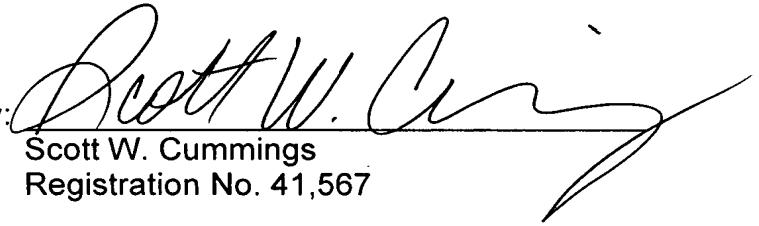
It is asserted in paragraph 2 of the Official Action that the restriction requirement is appropriate pursuant to PCT Rule 13.2 because the claimed groupings lack the same or corresponding technical feature, and allegedly "a review of the aqueous silica and precipitated silica and their claimed uses makes it clear that the claimed species (the instantly claimed compounds) are not novel over the prior art." These assertions are respectfully traversed. First, all of the claims, as currently amended, share a common technical feature. Namely, all claims include the process recited in claim 28. Secondly, the assertions contained in the Official

Action fail to establish that the process recited in claim 28 is not distinguishable over the prior art. Thus, the restriction requirement is improper and should be withdrawn.

The foregoing election is made without prejudice to applicants' right to file one or more divisional applications directed to the non-elected inventions should the restriction requirement be made final. An early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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